

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter.

Sinclair should not be allowed to preempt shows and use 90 minutes of time to air what is essentially a anti-Kerry political campaign ad. If they are allowed to do this, then it should be immediately followed with either a 90 minute pro-Kerry showing or with an anti-Bush film such as Fahrenheit 911 or Hijacking Catastrophy. They should not be allowed to stifle democracy.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.